

INEXPLICATA
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A twice-yearly publication showcasing the research and concerns of UFO and paranormal investigators in Spain, the Caribbean, Central and South America.

Editor

Scott Corrales

Assistant Editor

(all article submissions and letters)

Juan Carlos Mallory

P.O. Box 228

Derrick City, PA 16727

Contributing Editors

Manuel Carballal (Spain)

Willie Durand Urbina (Puerto Rico)

Dr. Rafael Lara Palmeros (Mexico)

Lucy Guzmán de Plá (Puerto Rico)

DEPARTMENTS AND COLUMNS

<i>Ex Libris and Dr. Rafael Lara's MEXICO WATCH will return in our next issue!</i>
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Welcome to INEXPLICATA
Number 4
Summer 1999

The apparent loss of interest in ufologica made us wonder if it was really prudent to continue with Inexplicata, particularly since our coverage is centered on a very small sub-category of the field. But seeing the quality of the material we have received from our correspondents (with our apologies to those whose material had to be left out due to sheer lack of space) we felt that such valuable material should not be allowed to languish in a hard drive somewhere.

So, where does Number 4 lead us? We follow Dr. Rafael Lara in Mexico as he visits hitherto unclassified ruins in the Veracruz wilderness (near the summit of Cerro Gordo, where a number of battles have been fought in Mexico's turbulent past) and also look into the possibility that Mexico's pyramids were carefully aligned with each other and with the volcanoes they were supposed to represent--testimony to the skill and knowledge of these forgotten builders; we come to the conclusion of Josep Guixarro's "Secrets of the Friendship", with results that promise to stun UFO believers and thrill conspiracy buffs; Angel Briongos Martínez takes us to a haunted boot camp of the Spanish armed forces, and Pablo Villarubia combs through "The Mystery of Honduras".

Enjoy the read, and have a great summer!

Scott Corrales
Editor
INEXPLICATA

It has now again become fashionable to delve into the stone-encoded mysteries of our ancient forbears, and Mesoamerica should not be excluded from this equation for any reason whatsoever. The following article, written by our Senior Contributing Editor Dr. Rafael Lara Palmeros, builds upon the ground-breaking information uncovered by Dr. Rubén Morante, whose findings were rebuffed by his country's formal archaeological establishment.

The Magical Alignments of the Mexican Pyramids

by Dr. Rafael A. Lara Palmeros, CEFP (Mexico)

"To you, to me, Stonehenge and Chartres Cathedral are the work of the same Ancient Man under different names: we know what He did and even what He thought he believed in, but we don't know why...."

W.H. Auden

Whenever we delve into the book of human history, we can see that humankind, in any location it has settled, has preserved a genetic-chromosomal-memory tradition, according to the late Robert Charroux, which produced extraordinary doctrinal parallels in different civilizations. For centuries, the pyramids have fascinated the human spirit all over the world. An infinite number of theories have been put forth to explain their construction; however, we do not know for sure the reason or reasons which prompted our ancestors to build such extraordinary monuments. In spite of it all, one thing remains certain: our ancestors were perfectly aware of the relationship between man and the Universe and therefore, with nature...something which 20th century man has been struggling to find.

As Told in Tradition

Fray Bernardino de Sahagún states:"...in coming toward the southlands in search of Paradise, they were not wrong, since in the opinion of many writers, it was located beneath the equinoxial line, and to think of it on top of a mighty mountain is also correct, since the sources also tell us that the Earthly Paradise was beneath the equinoxial line and on top of an extremely tall mountain whose summit reaches the moon..." (1). The codexes and oral traditions of Pre-hispanic peoples dealt with a variety of sciences (astrology, mathematics, etc.) and that these manifested themselves in a variety of arts ranging from architecture to poetry. Within this tradition, mountains exerted a quasi-mystical sway over the mesoamerican peoples. To the Egyptians, the mountain, and the hill represented places of birth and resurrection. To the Babylonians, hills and mountains played a role in the development of their pyramids or seven-story ziggurats

which represented the Cosmic Mountain. It has been proven that the majority of these theocratic states had their origin in mountainous locations and that these, regardless of geographical location, have been related to the supernatural and all-powerful (i.e, Macchu-Picchu, Olympus, Mt. Sinai, etc.).

To the Mesoamericans, mountains were highest parts of the Earth to come into contact with the sky, the clouds and above all else, the stars. Our native ancestors made pilgrimages there to leave offerings (which have been found at the Xinatecatl, Citlatepetl, Popocatepetl, Matlacueye e Ixtaccihuatl--Mexico's five tallest volcanoes). The Aztecs built a beautiful temple on the summit of a mountain in Malinalco; at Tepoztlán, famous for its UFO sightings, they built a temple whose walls presented bas-reliefs of symbolizing the 18 months of the Nahuatl calendar and the 4 directions.

The Nahoas codexes, such as the Nutall, Huamantla and others, feature smoking mountains-- volcanoes, hills, etc. Volcanoes were considered dual entities, since their eruptions would cause destruction yet their ashes were a source of fertility, leading our ancestors to believe in a dualist religious philosophy inspired by such opposing factors.

Archaeoastronomy and Vulcanoastronomy

Sir Eric Thompson (2) was one of the earliest and foremost proponents of Archaeoastronomy, the branch of archaeology which correlates the discoveries of the past and their relationship to the stars. An example of this would be the descent of the Serpent, Kukulcan's emblem, down the balustrades of the El Castillo pyramid in Chichen Itzá during the equinoxes (3).

In 1986, following in-depth research on the subject, Mexican scholar Rubén Morante promoted his theory of Vulcanoastronomy, a belief that did not explain all of the alignments in direct relationship with volcanoes, did relate to them, given that pyramids were mountain-shaped constructions, places where Men and Gods could be close to one another (4). In 1992, this author and the Archaeological Investigation Group (AIG) of the CENAHVA, took up Dr. Morante's initial research considering that the vulcanoastronomical theory deals with an entire system of orientation and location of pre-hispanic buildings and cities, based on the Sun's position, on important positions of the calendar, in the location of other archaeological sites and above all, by the presence of volcanoes. It was for these reasons that our research was undertaken at 7 Mexican volcanoes and the country's most important archaeological sites.

Orientation of the Pre-Hispanic Structures

The construction of temples, pyramids, mounds, etc. in the pre-hispanic world was the subject of methodical work by its builders. The symbolic factors which played an important role in the construction projects were numerous, and for this reason, the architect needed to have an exhaustive knowledge of his own religion, astronomy, geography, geology and the arts of his profession. Orientation had a mystical-astrological quality, and

humans were so influenced by these calendars that they lived their lives on them. Almost all pre-hispanic structures are oriented toward the cardinal points, and although their builders knew this, the axes of many of their buildings were not entirely precise, perhaps due to the existence of a point in space which caused the deviation, such as the paths of other heavenly bodies (Venus, Mars, etc.). as Arveni and others have stated (5). However, this event could have come about due to the presence of volcanoes and mountains which are the prominent points during sunrise and sunset, and which exerted a considerable influence on the religious beliefs of our forebears. Our investigation led us to note that there is a natural alignment in central Mexico between the Sun and the two largest volcanoes: The Pico de Orizaba (Citlaltepetl) and Popocatepetl, which are linked by the sun's rays during the equinoxes. It is our belief that this alignment can be seen from the slopes of the volcanoes themselves and was taken as the basis to designate such a key point during the equinox, serving as the inspiration for a pyramidal orientation and location system (bear in mind Cheops, Stonenhenge, etc). The builders therefore possessed a clear understanding of sacred geometry.

Our method consisted of pure observation, witnessing the equinox from the slopes of Popocatepetl and the winter solstice from the ruins of Teotihuacán, with the sun rising exactly from behind the Pico de Orizaba. When visual location was not possible, we would go to the volcano or to the corresponding archaeological site to determine the geographical north-south axis; on some occasions it was necessary to wait for sunrise or sunset during the corresponding equinox or solstice in order to measure the angle of the sun's direction on the horizon. Through the use of an azimuthal table it was possible to transfer the lines to a map in order to see the projection sites and form an alignment. It was also interesting to find out if the ancient Mexicans possessed geographical charts (at this time no maps covering large areas are known to exist); however, there are pictographic documents showing roads, terrain features, bridges, etc. There is also a unit of measure called "matl" which means "arm" in Nahuatl, and equals 1 rod (6).

Source of the Alignments

The earliest pre-hispanic settlements were chosen for a variety of factors (natural resources, rivers, food, etc.). It is believed that the calculations used to establish the vulcano-astroarchaeological orientation was necessary prior to the occupation of a given site. The earliest site presenting such an orientation is Tlatilco (Lower Preclassic Period, up to 1500 years BCE), which was settled by primitive crop-growers. During the Middle Preclassic (1300 BCE), Tlatilco was exposed to Olmec influences, but why would the Olmecs have chosen such a site? Tlatilco is located at the spot from which the sun could be seen to emerge from the Ixtaccihuatl volcano on the day of the winter solstice. The Olmecs, on their trajectory toward the Anahuac Valley, had already seen the alignment between the Popocatepetl and the Citlaltepetl peaks during equinoxes, which inspired the

mystico-magical practices of this culture. The Olmecs arrived at the shores of southeastern Mexico 1500 years BCE. Playing an important role in the development of prehispanic cultures, the founded San Lorenzo Tenochtitlán and La Venta somewhere between 1000 and 800 BCE. It is highly significant that they were volcano-worshippers, since offerings were left on the edge of the San Martín volcano's crater in the vicinity of Los Tuxtlas. The pyramid at La Venta is also based upon a volcano. This site represents an alignment of various axes.

Magical Orientation of the Archaeological Sites

For purposes of our study, we employed geographic charts using a scale of 1:1,200,000 and 1:3,500,000 from the Office of Cartography and Projections of the Secretaría de Comunicaciones y Transportes (S.C.T.), two of which correspond to central Mexico and four corresponding to the Mesoamerican region in general.

In Map 1, Line A indicates the only direction from which the sun can be seen to rise behind the summit of Ixtaccihuatl during the winter solstice, where we can find Tlatilco ("the place of hidden things"). In Map 2, we can see that La Venta is related to two volcanoes: The Pico de Orizaba (Citlaltepetl) and La Malinche. We must bear in mind that La Venta was used as the basis for the alignment of 7 dwelling places of that region, 3 in the Nahuatl area and 4 in the Maya area. However, it is possible to find three additional alignments in another two archaeological sites: Cuicuilco and Teotihuacan, the former which was built 600 years BCE and which presents a clear relationship to La Venta and volcanoes. Two facts establish this: first of all, its conical configuration with a circular base, very similar to the La Venta Pyramid, and second, the fact that the God of Fire was worshipped at Cuicuilco.

In Map 2, Line C links La Venta to Cuicuilco, crossing the Iztaccihuatl, a volcano which had already made its presence felt in another Preclassic era alignment at Tlatilco. Teotihuacán betrays evident Olmec influence and 2 alignments toward La Venta, the first of which occurred on 2 dates -- May 19th and July 25th -- the only days of the year in which the sun reaches the highest place in the firmament on the parallel occupied by Teotihuacán (see Map 2, Letter D). The 2nd alignment considers the Teotihuacán axis and its characteristic deviation of 15 degrees 30' east of true north, which has so intrigued archaeologists. If this axis is extended toward the southeast, it is related with another line linking the La Malinche and Pico de Orizaba volcanoes (Map 2, Letter B). It must be noted that Tula, Palenque, Yaxchilán, Piedras Negras and Chichen Itza align with La Venta. P. Gendrop (7) believes that there is an important alignment between these cities. Map 2, Letter B shows four important locations: the continuation of the Teotihuacán axis, making a straight angle with La Malinche, Pico de Orizaba and La Venta. If we continue southward, we will find that Palenque also falls into alignment.

Yaxchilán aligns with La Venta when the sun's rays strike the San Martín Volcano and Tula on the morning of the winter solstice (Map 3, Line E). Piedras Negras transits' zenith at sunset with

Teotihuacan and Tula.

Chichén Itza aligns with La Venta on the dawn of the summer solstice (Map 4, Line F).

The Copán/Xochicalco Alignment

These two unique cities feature bas-reliefs depicting the celebration of "astronomical conventions" held in pre-hispanic America, whose purpose was to make adjustments to the calendar during leap years. There is sufficient evidence to believe that there was contact between the astronomers of both cities in spite of the great distance between them (8). The Line which runs from the dawn of the winter solstice makes Copán align with Xochicalco both on May 15th and on June 29th. On these dates, an alignment occurs at both dawn and dusk--unique in the entire world--indicating astonishing astronomical computations by the astronomers in each metropolis. Said calculations established the basis of the calendars which guided the regions indicated by La Venta: the Nahoia and Maya areas, respectively.

The Monte Albán Alignment

Under Olmec influence, this is one of Mesoamerica's oldest sites (7th century BCE). Monte Albán is related to Xochicalco (Map 5, Letter H). The alignment between Tikal and Monte Albán comes about on the equinoxes, and the one between Monte Albán and Uxmal on the dawn of the summer solstices. On the sunset of that very same day, Monte Albán aligns itself with the Pico de Orizaba and Cofre de Perote volcanoes and the El Tajín pyramid.

The El Tajín Alignment

El Tajín, located to the south of the port of Pánuco near the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, can be found in the Totonacapan area, which is divided into the La Huasteca and the Maya region of southeastern Mexico. El Tajín is a contemporary of Xochicalco, Tulum, Uxmal and Chichén Itzá, as well as of Monte Albán. It is in alignment with Uaxactún, Chichén Itzá and Tulum (the Tajín pyramid is a true calendar, possessing 365 niches). Uaxatún has an alignment during the winter solstice with the site upon which El Tajín would later be built (Map 3, Line M). Chichén Itzá aligns with El Tajín on the equinoxes shortly before the serpent of light and shadows is projected by the sun's rays down the balustrades of Kukulcan's temple (9). On the sunset of that day, El Tajín aligns with Tulum (Maps 4 and 5, Lines N and O), giving us two Maya cities which on 3 very important dates (winter solstice and both equinoxes) point toward El Tajín, the most visible and massive calendar in Mesoamerica, which then returns the alignment to a third Maya city: Tulum. It should be noted that Uxmal also comes into contact with Tula during the equinoxes (Map 4, Line P)

Winter Solstice Alignment and the Volcanic Axes of the Altiplano

There are six alignments which constitute irrefutable proof

of the continuity of cosmological ideas which span nearly 3,000 years since the first tribes along the margins of Lake Texcoco welcomed the Olmecs until the Spanish Conquest. While Cuicuilco and Teotihuacán had La Venta as their base, they were also related to the volcanoes and the dawn of the winter solstice. On the other hand, the builders of Cuicuilco, Tlatilco and Teotihuacán itself chose sites which aligned on the dawn of the winter solstice with Mexico's three tallest volcanoes--Pico de Orizaba or Citlatépetl (5747 mts), Popocatépetl (5,452 mts), and Iztaccíhuatl (5,286 mts). It is very important to note that Tenochtitlán was also built on the line aimed at Tlatilco on the winter solstice, when the sun rose toward Iztaccíhuatl (Map 1, Line A), as well as the alignment which includes Popocatépetl-Cofre de Perote-Malinche, if extended toward the south, where we can find a direct relation to Xochicalco, a ceremonial center of great importance in ages past (Map 1, Letter G).

Map 6 presents us with a line running from Tlatilco and Cuicuilco which is bisected by another running from Pico de Orizaba to the Nevado de Toluca volcano, passing through Cholula and Popocatépetl. Another line runs across the Iztaccíhuatl toward Tenochtitlán, or another line reaches La Malinche and bisects Teotihuacán. If we measure the angles formed by these lines, they are all practically 90 degree angles.

The most astonishing fact isn't that the ceremonial centers followed almost identical blueprints in their construction, but that they belonged to populations that did not belong to the same era (Tlatilco predates Cuicuilco, which in turn flourished before Teotihuacán, which had been abandoned 600 years prior to the founding of Tenochtitlán).

The traditions of building temples over "magical" volcanic axes inspired the cosmology with endured throughout the history of Mexico's civilized cultures.

Conclusions

Based on the investigation conducted, we may draw the following conclusions:

1. Many cultures on Earth, including the Mesoamericans, have considered mountains to be mystical places which enabled them to be closer to the stars as well as the gods, laying down the basis of the calendar, the cornerstone of their agriculture.
2. Human constructions, above all those presenting a mystical-religious character, were oriented according to the solstices and the equinoxes. This practice was followed in Mexico, only that here the stars were seen in relation to the mountains, thus creating a system of alignments that is unique in the world.
3. The idea of taking volcanoes, along with the sun, as the basis for orienting structures, must have emerged from the observation of the alignment between Pico de Orizaba and

Popocatépetl on the equinoxes.

4. In Mexico, mountains became the models upon which pyramids were built: trunco-conical shapes such as those of La Venta and Cuicuilco.
5. Alignments come about when at least three important features (volcanoes, ceremonial centers and the location of the sun during equinoxes and solstices, or days of transit zeniths on sunrises and sunsets) are located on a straight line drawn between them.
6. The practice of orienting and locating ceremonial centers began with the Olmecs.
7. In order to carry out these alignments, it was necessary for architects to have a deep understanding of mathematics, sacred geometry, trigonometry, geography and cartography, using both squares, protractors and even the compass, in order to draw large maps, and it is possible that these were made with a precision comparable to our own, and which was 2,000 years in advance as regards the rest of the world.
8. This knowledge was secret and transmitted from one generation to another to a chosen group, which is why it has been lost. An example of this can be found in the actions of Ixcóatl, the Aztec *Tlatoani* who according to Sahagún (1) burned all of the codexes and paintings to keep them from falling into the hands of the unenlightened.
9. This admirable orientation system, which presents the considerable advancement of the Mesoamerican cultures as regards their contemporaries worldwide, may have sought to mark both the solar points regarding the calendar as well as the location of ceremonial centers so that they could be visited by anyone, whether by land, sea...or air.

ENDNOTES

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Mexico's coastal regions remain, to this day, a source of both scientific and paranormal mysteries. Read on!

Emiliano Zapata Municipality: The Mystery of the Forgotten Stones
by Dr. Rafael A. Lara Palmeros, CEFEP (Mexico)

Since the end of December 1998, a series of insistent rumors had come to our attention: a broad swath of virgin forest had been semi-discovered by some peasants 24 kilometers away from Jalapa, the state capital of Veracruz, within an area contained in the municipality of Emiliano Zapata. The region, covered by exuberant semi-tropical vegetation, shelters a considerable number of unusual stones -- approximately 123 in number -- sculpted with handsome petroglyphs which have remained in excellent conditions in spite of the passage of time.

On Thursday, February 25th, 1999, Lic. Marino Leal Trujillo, Ms. Virginia Hernández and the author of this article headed for the zone which was under the protection of the region's inhabitants, since it is their belief that this and many other locations are sacred. After discussing the matter with the leaders of the local cooperative farm, we were allowed to enter the region, having to make a 150 meter (400 foot) descent following a tortuous trail filled with dense vegetation, mosquitoes and poisonous snakes known as "nauyaques" in this area. Upon reaching our destination, we were able to look upon a number of stones scattered throughout the ground, covered in moss, dust and vegetation. Once these were removed, we found a considerable number of petroglyphs in a variety of shapes and sizes. The size of the stones was approximately 4-5 meters in length by 3 meters long, having irregular, eroded borders and some of them apparently having been dressed.

The following designs were found:

Spirals

Circles

Wavy Lines

Crosses

Transversal and Horizontal Lines Similar to Stairwells

Humanoid Shapes.

With the cleaning of the stones out of the way, we proceeded with measuring the petroglyphs as well as making rubbings of the most representative designs on manila paper using crayons. In this regard it is worth noting that our attention was drawn by a cross composed of squares, each measuring approximately 4.5 cm long and 4 cm wide. Each of the cross's "arms" were composed of two

parallel lines having 4 squares each. We were intrigued presence of a humanoid figure dressed in a sort of helmet and having two small, spindly legs, and whose upper body appeared to be endowed with utensils and/or equipment. It also possible to observe semi-undulating lines, apparent representations of hills or the trajectories of certain lights which can be seen in the area. To the vast majority of prehispanic societies, the spiral plays a predominant role. A variety of authors have sought to attach different meanings to it, and we thus find that some believe it represents the snake, while others suggest cosmic forces and still others claim it depicts the presence of spacecraft. The spiral was represented in nearly 50% of the stones studied during our investigation.

Another interesting petroglyph involved the presence of transversal and oblique lines, apparently representing flights of stairs (it is very possible that this region once housed some kind of pyramidal structure). It is also possible to find, to a lesser degree petroglyphs shaped like spiders, jaguars, monkeys and certain fish--animal forms which are currently hard to find in this location.

Given the characteristics of this area as well as their relationship with others which are also known, it is possible it once harbored primitive Nahoas and/or Totonaca tribes, who became the basis for these cultures as they are known today. It has been hitherto impossible to classify the area discovered according to a corresponding historical period (Lower Preclassic, Upper Preclassic, etc.). Authorities having competence in the matter, such as the Instituto Veracruzano de la Cultura (IVC), the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH) itself, or the School of Anthropology of the University of Veracruz, have all paid little or no attention to this find, arguing that they lack sufficient funds to embark upon an investigation of these considerable treasures, and fortunately, the region's inhabitants are opposed to the presence of the misnamed "competent authorities", since it is widely known that these are engaged in ransacking the archaeological sites and selling their discoveries to U.S. and European collectors, mainly from Germany and France.

A curious fact bears mentioning: this area is very close to a mountain range which forms part of the Eastern Sierra Madre, which includes the well-known Tepeapulco Hill, as site of intense UFO activity. This phenomenon has intensified since 1993, resulting in a considerable number of photographs being taken. This author has obtained important photographs and videotaped material which has been found to be genuine by other researchers.

My hypothesis is as follows: since the area is highly magnetic, the ancient occupants of the place settled there and captured a variety of phenomena on their petroglyphs. Given that the presence of UFOs is common at every archaeological site, and it is still possible to see them in our day and age, the only question that remains to be answered is the following: could the humanoid figure, obtained by means of rubbings, represent an unknown visitor? Personally, I lack the knowledge to answer such a question.

I would like to extend my gratitude to the inhabitants of the

area, keeping my promise not to disclose the precise location of the area investigated.

Angel Briongos is one of Spain's most tenacious investigators of the paranormal, on a quest to find corroboration for the "Saragossa Poltergeist" case which occurred in the 1930's and commanded worldwide attention. Angel is a frequent contributors to publications such as KARMA-7 and Enigmas. This is his first contribution to INEXPLICATA.

The Haunted Barracks of Cerler

by Angel Briongos Martinez and Javier Garcia Blanco

"That night it was my turn to stand guard. It must have been two or three in the morning. I was facing the guardhouse and felt cold. There was a door whose padlock rattled noisily in the wind. Don't you suppose? Well, I imagine it was. Well, from the sentry box I could see squat-all up in the mountains. I had my Cetme rifle ready and with the clip loaded, I was so afraid. In other words, there shouldn't be anyone up in the mountains, but I could see a light up there--a light where there should be none at all. The light moved, descended, and suddenly rose again. I advised the corporal and he laughed. Well, I thought, I must be imagining things. But the event was recorded in the guard roster."

Experiences such as this one, recounted by Oscar Blanco Calvo, have been taking place in the Cerler military base since the summer of 1992. Since then, staying at the base has become hell for the recruits and subofficers stationed there.

While the impressive phenomena began in 1992, it all started a year and a half earlier, in March 1991, when an accident occurred at a nearby peak while maneuvers were being held. Nine persons died in the incident--seven soldiers and two subofficers.

A Tragic Accident

It was the morning of Monday, March 11, 1991. The Civil Protection Service at Huesca had issued a warning the previous Friday regarding the risk of landslides in the Aragonese Pyrenees around that time as a result of the recent thaw. Despite the warning, and expedition led by Captain Luis Silvera mobilized to perform its winter survival exercises. The groups as formed by a total of 133 individuals, divided into groups of ten or twelve soldiers. Tragedy was unleashed a few hours later, at a peak known as Tuca Blanca de Paderna in the Maladeta region: a tremendous avalanche buried a considerable part of the expedition under tons of ice. Luckily, most of the soldiers were able to escape on their own or aided by their buddies. After intensive rescue operations by the Guardia Civil and the Army, employing trained dogs, was it possible to recover the bodies. The corpses were temporarily guarded in the Cerler military base (where the expedition's elements were temporarily headquartered)--more precisely in the dry-off area where equipment used for winter maneuvers is thawed

out. On the following day, March 12, a funeral for five of the dead soldiers was held on the base. Meanwhile, rescue operations continued with little success--the remaining casualties would not be found until many days later. After the tragic event, Benasque Valley and the Cerler military base would return to normal, but the peace would not last for very long.

The Soldiers Speak Out

From the summer of 1992 onward, strange rumors began to circulate around the town of Cerler and the nearby town of Benasque. If the rumors had any truth to them, some of the soldiers stationed at Cerler had been experiencing, for a certain length of time, a series of unexplained events that kept them in a constant state of fear. Quickly, recruits and local residents alike related the events to the still-fresh accident at Tuca Blanca. As if it weren't bad enough, the phenomena appeared to take place with greatest intensity in the dry-off area where the bodies had been placed, as well as the adjacent room, which was destined to lodging soldiers during certain times, particularly when maneuvers were being held. On September 28th of that year the news made it into the regional newspapers. The Diario del Alto Aragón featured on its cover a most curious and alluring story: Investigation of Strange Paranormal Phenomena Underway at the Cerler Base. The inside pages explained in detail the various strange phenomena which according to military sources, were being experienced by a number of soldiers stationed in this base in a tiny Pyrenean town. The newspaper also mentioned the commissioning of an investigation with the ultimate purpose of uncovering the truth to these events, as well as a request for assistance by the military to a team of parapsychologists from Barcelona. According to the story appearing in the Diario del Alto Aragón, the soldiers were faced on an almost daily basis with a plethora of incomprehensible phenomena, such as unexplained noises, doors that opened and shut by themselves, shadows darting hither and fro during the night, and objects that fell to the ground without any apparent reason.

An Official Cover-Up?

The more suspicious minds felt that a cover-up effort on the part of the armed forces was underway barely a day later, when the Heraldo de Aragón newspaper featured a communiqué issued by the Huesca Military Government, stating that no strange phenomena had transpired at Cerler. Commander Espinosa would add to this statement: "It is not true that there is a history of paranormal events at this base, and much less that the general would have enlisted the aid of any parapsychologist, nor of any person devoted to the study of such events, for the simple reason that nothing at all has happened there. Life is normal and uneventful, as ever. I would like to know the source of these stories." However, a number of persons who were on duty at this base during the dates in question did not seem to be in agreement with the official statements. A subofficer stationed at the base stated on

that very same day to an Heraldo reporter: "Strange things happen at the base, such as sudden blackouts, noises from the doors and other phenomena. I myself have not seen anything, I only know what soldiers have told me. Of course there's something going on."

Whatever the situation, the fact is that strange goings-on were occurring at the base--events as inexplicable as those which had been experienced by Oscar Blasco, for whom there had been no end to the surprises on that night. After his unpleasant encounter with the enigmatic light, he would experience, together with another soldier, an incredible experience that he would never forget: "When sentry duty was over I went to sleep. Later I had to go on patrol with another kid, and it involved going around the base in circles."

The two young servicemen began their patrol of the base feeling ill at ease due to what Oscar Blasco has seen earlier. "We started to walk. Looking at the trucks and at all that, already scared shitless with what I'd seen. We started inspecting the façade to make sure all the windows were shuttered. Well, we kept walking, and in the time it takes to walk the loop around the base--some 7 or 8 minutes, we noticed all that all of the windows were unshuttered." Stunned, the soldier told his companion. "Did you see that?"

Upon hearing the latter's affirmative reply, they agreed to walk around the building once more in hopes that it could all be ascribed to their imaginations. Unfortunately for them, the mystery was waiting for them upon their return. "We walked another round and then, we found the windows were shuttered again! We were really shitting ourselves."

The experience must have indeed been disquieting. When we visited these scene of the events, we were able to ascertain that this event could not have been a practical joke. The façade consisted of 36 windows on 3 separate floors. And as if this weren't enough, the shutters are equipped with locks to keep them from banging against the structure due to the wind. For this reason, it is very hard to open or close them in a short space of time without making any noise whatsoever. Certain that what they had witnessed was clearly out of kilter, they decided to notify the corporal of the watch.

"We informed the first corporal and he laughed. He said we were in bad shape, but the next day, we noticed that the logbook included a report of what we had seen. They were treating it as something completely normal." As this witness would tell us himself, other companions had told him experiences they had lived through which were even more chilling. Apparently, many reported seeing the deceased returning from skiing all dressed in white, falling down on the bunks and disappearing.

In some cases, such as that of recruit P.B.B. and his companions, the fear they withstood was indeed considerable, so much so that one way of releasing their fear consisted in getting drunk almost every day. According to the young soldiers, who were stationed there to fulfill their compulsory military service, the doors to their lockers would open and shut by themselves, and some of them would even appear the next day covered in scratches of an unexplained nature. "It was horrible. While we were in bed, we

could clearly hear the sound of the locker doors opening and closing noisily, as if by magic," stated P.B.B. As if all of this weren't enough, the sound of mysterious footsteps and the vision of sinister shadows added to the length of their stay in the military.

"On certain occasions, at night, we could clearly see human shadows moving through the bedrooms, accompanied by the sound of footsteps. It was too rough. We couldn't take it."

Another soldier, B.J.C., had the misfortune of experiencing a horrible situation. One night while on sentry duty, sheltering from the cold within the sentry box, he could hear the sound of footsteps closing in on his location. "The sound of the steps grew closer each time. I was very scared, since it felt I was being surrounded by those things. No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't see anyone."

This recruit, who will recall this harrowing experience the rest of his life, was not the only one who could hear the sound of sinister footsteps within the base. Angel Civera, a young man from Zaragoza who served at the Cerler base during 1994, was also witness to another distressing event: "I heard footsteps sometime after midnight. That day I was that last one to go to bed and I closed the two doors, knowing that no one else was up. I heard footsteps out in the hall. No doors were opened or anything. Of this I'm certain. If there had been anyone else, I would have heard the door to another dormitory open up."

This young man also told us of the existence of a large crack that ran along the building's façade from the floor to the roof. According to what older soldiers had told him, the enormous fissure had been formed shortly after the death of the mountaineering soldiers. During our investigation, we noticed that the base was built on a slope, which could have contributed to the natural formation of the opening.

An Apparent Sense of Tranquility

It would appear that the strange phenomena at the Cerler barracks have died down over the past months. The fact is that aside from the magnificent view offered by the entrancing Pyrenean landscape, we witnessed nothing else during our visit to the location. Perhaps this silence is due to the fear of some young soldiers who prefer to remain silent in the face of events which caused them to feel fear. Who knows? Perhaps after reading these lines, some of them may change their minds and choose to share their recollections and experiences.

<p><i>To those of you who were left "cliffhanging" in Inexplicata #3, you can now rest easy: here is the conclusion to Josep Guijarro's superb "Mysteries of the Friendship".</i></p>

Who Hides Behind The Friendship? (parts II and III)
by Josep Guijarro

[...] The answer to all these questions might be hiding in

Nuñoa, the Santiago de Chile neighborhood where Hugo Pacheco lives. The veteran ufologist meets there, every saturday, with a small group of people in order to "prepare" them for contact with the Friendship. "They are much more spiritually developed than we are." he states.

Pacheco was one of the first to learn of the Friendship in the mid-Eighties. "Ernesto de la Fuente came to my home," he remembers. "He was a sound engineer interested in learning if our research had found the link between ourselves and the space beings."

The intriguing character owned property in Santa Rosa de Chena and a ranch on Chiloé, not far from the village of Quemchi. That is where he met the members of the bizarre congregations. Ernesto spent long hours in front of his radio transmitter. The cattlemen would boast that some "gringos" were purchasing sick beef cattle for three times the going rate, and De la Fuente took umbrage at this. Years earlier he had worked as a war correspondent in Vietnam and had developed certain empathy toward the Americans, and perhaps this made him feel the urge to warn them of the injustice. It was thus that he met Ariel (see Inexplicata #3) who along with fourteen of his fellows would come into port to purchase provisions.

The island of Chiloé is certainly synonymous with isolation. Up to recently, telephone lines were pure fantasy and the majority of the streets and roads were unpaved. Electricity is notable for its absence, so it is considerably difficult to find one's way after dark.

One stormy night, there was a knock at Ernesto's door, some 15 kilometers from the nearest town. At the doorstep were three tall men with Scandinavian looks. "We would like to speak with you," they said. Ernesto allowed them to come in.

"We are the brothers from the island. We know about you, we know that you're the owner of all this, and we would like to give you the opportunity to become one of us, since we need to attract more people to the ways of the Lord."

Befuddled by how they'd found his residence, the man replied: "But I've never opened a Bible in my life!"

In spite of this, he began collaborating with them. The strangers wore white outfits and their features were remarkably similar, as if from the same multiple birth. The men were by no means Americans, and certainly had nothing to do with the "gringos". Who were they, indeed?

Hugo Pacheco was never invited to the Friendship's mysterious island, but he claims to have pursued, aboard a navy ship, one of the eight vessels that pull into Puerto Montt on a regular basis to resupply the island. This in itself is no mean feat. Chile's 11th Region is made up of thousands of islands separated by fjords and channels which range from a depth of 60 centimeters to 200 meters. Only experienced sailors and military helmsmen dare to navigate those waters. The risk of running aground or striking the rocks is considerable.

Friendship Island Described

According to Ernesto de la Fuente, who actually visited the island, there is a certain point after crossing the Moraleda Channel in which the vessels employed by the Friendship are magnetically guided to their enigmatic island. A entrance amid the rocks opens to provide access to the underground area, which is allegedly "equipped with all manner of advanced gear and electronic devices." De la Fuente was told that all the electronics originated in Valparaíso and in certain instances were brought in from abroad.

Upon reaching the bay, the humans were relieved of their jewelry and wristwatches, receiving in return an odd bracelet through which communications and information may be received. They are also outfitted with very tight white outfits, similar to wet suits, but made of synthetic fibers. According to De la Fuente, after all these preparations were over, the humans were guided to a series of chambers which involved crossing a network of tunnels leading to a variety of temples. Their walls apparently feature some lettering in bas-relief. An elevator whisked him down fourteen levels (everything on Friendship Island is in multiples of seven) and he was able to see a micro-society working in perfect order. Everyone seemed involved in some sort of oceanographic work centered on a hexadecimal computer system.

Ernesto did not notice any hierarchies. "Everyone seemed to know what his job was," but he was startled to see many obviously South American people working in the metal extraction process. These people bore a trident-like logo on their outfits, a symbol he also saw elsewhere in the fantastic site.

During his stay on the island, De la Fuente was able to see the living quarters of Ariel and his followers, but was also told of the existence of rooms having different atmospheric mixes and pressures which had been created for the "Angels of the Lord". Were humans and non-humans co-existing in the same place?

He was finally able to enter one of the temples. It proved to be an ultra-modern location with an old wooden door. Its interior contained an arch covered in Egyptian-style hieroglyphics. A shaft of light fell from the domed ceiling, where it was broken into colors by a prism...

When NASA Steps In

All of these events and the UFO sighting changed the lives of Octavio Ortiz and his family. Glued to the radio every day, they tried to glean more data and clues to the supposed extraterrestrial origin of the Friendship.

The family even says that one day, through the intercession of Raimundo Sepúlveda, the U.S. national space agency, NASA, sent them a log book in which they were to keep careful track of their communications. Along with the logbook --a hard covered volume with the word "RECORD" stenciled on it -- Sepúlveda also gave them a box of ballpoint pens stamped "U.S. GOVERNMENT" on them. Why would the U.S. be interested in the experiences of mere ham radio aficionados? Was there some shadowy plot concealed behind the Friendship?

Contact with the brotherhood has been interrupted for some

two years now. The island's residents claimed that the Chilean military was recording their communications and it would henceforth become necessary to try other means of contact, such as telepathy.

Only one person was able to solve this riddle--the only person to have visited the Friendship's island and returned to talk about it, the man considered to be the intermediary between the alleged aliens and mankind: Ernesto de la Fuente.

I picked up the phone and called him to set up an appointment. The phone rang once, twice, twenty times; he wasn't home. Had he gone south for Easter break? There was only one way to find out--by flying out to Quemchi.

This was the sixth time in the past two months that I set foot in Santiago de Chile's Arturo Benítez airport, but on this occasion I was in the domestic terminal, ready to catch the plane that would take me, perhaps toward the definitive answer to the maddening question: were The Friendship an alien base located in southern Chile? Were they just a rumor, or on the contrary, some sort of superpower mind control exercise?

Over 8 hours of flight time separated me from Quemchi, my destination. The whole story had begun some 15 kilometers from this small fishing village. At an estate in this location, owned by Ernesto de la Fuente, the mysterious intergalactic "tenants" were seen for the very first time. That was where they purchased the sick cattle and where they transmitted their message of redemption over the airwaves.

It was also true that the only direct allusion to their alien origin came from the lips of Hugo Pacheco, who had been questioned by many when he stated that the mysterious beings hailed from beyond the Pleiades. Cristina, who was always worried by the situation, quizzed the beings on the subject and the enigmatic Ariel told her that while he was the child of a human mother, "*we are not of this world, but we belong to humankind.*" Who, then, were The Friendship?

While waiting for Flight N4171 to be announced, I lost myself in the numerous notes of my logbook. The last interview with the Ortiz family had clarified a number of doubts about the riddle and had also brought about new questions. In the event that it all proved to be a joke, a prank by the ham radio operators, how could one explain the multiple paranormal phenomena related to the situation?

Strange Phenomena

"On one occasion," recalled Octavio Ortiz, "we hypnotized my wife with the intention of transporting her to the island in that state. What's funny is that up until that time we had no background information on the site and Cristina described a subterranean location, a network of tunnels filled with technology. Ariel would later tell us that that was how the island was constructed. It's also curious," he continued, "that during her hypnotic voyage she was guided by a woman named Elga. We had never heard of any women in their community before."

What was truly surprising was that upon establishing radio

contact with the Friendship on the following day, Ariel sent them regards from Elga. How was it possible for The Friendship to know about their experiments? Was Cristina really there in an immaterial state? Perhaps the answers to these questions would be within my grasp in the southern reaches.

I was surrounded by a whirlwind of passengers and luggage. My mind, however, only had enough room for the fears and words of Raul Nuñez, my travel companion, who before leaving Spain had warned me about the perils and lack of cooperation I could expect there...words which would unfortunately prove to be prophetic.

Raúl was familiar with the surroundings. He had visited Chiloé in 1995 and had searched for the island in earnest, but the climactic and geographic conditions of the Chonos Archipelago made him desist. Would I achieve my goal? The weather would certainly not make matters any easier. Upon my arrival in Puerto Montt, a powerful storm forced me to remain on continental Chile and wait a day to cross the Chacao Straits: would I meet Ernesto de la Fuente? Would I be able to find some cattle rancher, eyewitness or even perhaps a visitor to the mysterious island?

Mind Control Experiments?

"To say that these people come from the Chonos Archipelago," explained Jorge Anfruns upon learning of my intention of finding the island, "cannot be verified in practical terms."

Surprise was etched upon my face.

"All those who have formed opinions on the canal zone," he added, "do not know them. Third world countries like our own are cut off from state of the art technology. Any person having good radio equipment and decent antennae can deceive us into believing any story they tell..."

Anfruns believes that the Friendship affair is a sociological experiment from beginning to end. But what kind of experiment? Why does it involve normal, middle-class Chileans? When I asked this question of Octavio and Cristina, they chose to reply what The Friendship had offered as an answer during one of their transmissions: "You have the right genetics."

On the other hand, Rodrigo Fuenzalida, a sociologist and president of the AION, considers that the two main families involved in the communications were "good people, but easily manipulated."

Rodrigo set out to prove it. "I went about imitating the voice of The Friendship characters over radio and it worked out well, since I recorded the background noise--"

"In other words, you can hear the carrier, right?"

"From the start. I then imitated their sing-song (referring to the *re, mi, do, do* notes--see Inexplicata #3) and I called Octavio and his people on three separate occasions, and they all bought it. The communication was so good that The Friendship called on a certain occasion and they thought it was me! They were very easy to manipulate."

What then would be the purpose of this experiment? Who would carry it out? To stay in contact with radio operators 24 hours a day is not within everyone's reach. It involves a considerable waste of time, if a joke. The Friendship had also solved Alberto

and Ernesto de la Fuente's finances and had made monetary transactions, at least to purchase foodstuffs and fuel in Puerto Montt. Who was paying the bills?

I took advantage of my stay to check on some of these operations. It is evident that time flows differently for the residents of Chiloé than it does for Europeans: one gets the sensation that time has stood still and not progressed there.

Some fifteen years ago, the dictator Pinochet sold, in some cases, and gave away, in others, land in the southern part of the country to promote settlement. The austerity of the climate and the isolation (access is only possible by boat) brought the illusions and projects of many settlers to an end.

The homes in this region of Chilean Patagonia are basically made of wood and very humble. The majority of the streets are unpaved. Cold weather and poverty have made this people very withdrawn and they appear to be in no hurry at all--no hurry whatsoever, I would add. Attempts at finding data on the *Mitilus II*, The Friendship's supply ship, at the Puerto Montt Port Authority, finding information on lodging at the tourist bureau or purchasing some "simple" navigation charts for the 9th Region became ordeals before departing by boat. Even renting a car at Ancaud became a sideshow, and the fact is that sometimes, fate as everything planned out. Otherwise, how could one explained what happened later on?

Looking for De la Fuente

I pointed my Renault 19 toward the village of Quemchi, nearly 60 kilometers of lonely road shaded by gigantic trees in the light of massed clouds bathed in ochre light by the sunset. There, in this "supernatural" atmosphere, a native and his daughter made a sudden appearance. The high beams of my car caused them to stop.

"I'm looking for Ernesto de la Fuente," I said. "Do you know him?"

"Who's looking for him?" the native replied.

The question caught me off-base. I couldn't say I was a journalist, because this could cause the man to suspect my reasons..."I'm a friend from Spain." I managed to say.

"You left the road some three kilometers behind. It's the Taiquemo Homestead."

I turned the car around and looked for the promised entrance. In the meantime, darkness had fallen across the land. I found an open curve and my headlights fell on three people who were expecting the arrival of a bus inside a wooden shack. "Is this the entrance to Ernesto de la Fuente's homestead?"

"Who wants to know?" asked the older of the three.

My eyes fell upon the woodsman's powerful body and I replied what I had told the other man. "I'm a friend from Spain."

"Some friend." he noted sternly. "He hasn't lived here for eight years."

I have to admit that the man's response shattered a good part of my plans and dreams, but I didn't give up. "Could you at least point the way? Maybe the new owner can tell me his whereabouts..."

"Mister Castillo isn't around either..."

All these negatives seemed incredible, particularly during a trip in which everything had gone so well. Finally another one of the men, tall and lean, offered to guide me a certain distance. He got in the car--I now shiver at my boldness--and drove into a narrow rural road. Tree limbs scratched at the sides of my rented car while the tires plunged into the road's muddy puddles. About a kilometer into the drive, the woodsman asked to be let out.

"Keep going straight!" he said, leaning on the door. "Ernesto's house is big and black--you can't miss it!"

Was it not strange that the man should get out of the car right in the middle of the forest? Why did he do it at all, if he was in fact waiting for the bus back to Quemchi with his fellows?

The car's high beams continued piercing the night and a valuable recollection came to mind. Thanks to the assistance of Chilean newspaperwoman Patricia Ruiz de Viñaspre I had been able to learn that the "contactee" had gotten into debt with that farm some two years earlier. Then...the woodsman had lied when he said that it had been at least eight years since the man had lived there. Why the deception? Was he trying to ward me off?

The road widened and after a slight and muddy slope, I saw a glow in the distance. Was it Ernesto's house? I then stopped the car and the lights went out. I swallowed. This was not the best place to have a car battery die on me. Strange--the dashboard was still lit and the engine was running. Why had the headlights gone out? My hand leaned on the light switch and I passed the crossing. It worked! But my joy was ephemeral--the lights went out again, inexplicably, and without my foot ever touching the pedal, the engine began racing, one, two, three times...this was decidedly not normal.

Frightened, I looked around. Only the arrival of a flying saucer was needed to make this a case straight out of the abduction books. When the lights at the crossing changed again, I turned the car around and sped back the five kilometers that separated me from Quemchi. Tomorrow would be another day, and I would visit De la Fuente protected by the sun's light.

Monetary Transactions

"Fate" had some surprises in store, however. There are only two guesthouses in the fishing village, in other words, private homes which rent out their rooms if one has the right looks and the right amount of money. I still remember the looks that Mrs. Carmen Reyes gave me--dressed as I was in hiking boots and olive-green plants, with my perspired shirt and my spirit out of place due to the experience in the car, would I be able to get a room?

It was then that I noticed a rune hanging from a thin chain around her neck. "Do you like the occult?" I asked.

She liked the question and rented me a room. Curiously, fate had sent me there and led me to Carmen, who was the village schoolteacher and had known Ernesto de la Fuente.

"Yes, he was a tall, slender man," she recalled, "he even appeared on TV talking about those gringos who bought cattle."

Carmen gave me some valuable information that would assist me in locating some of the cattlemen the following day.

Before covering all the farms within a five kilometer radius on foot, I stopped at Quemchi's port for a moment. A number of boats were moored there, but none of them was the Mitilus II. In some location on this pier, De la Fuente would meet the mysterious members of The Friendship, and this was where they bought provisions and held forth on matters scientific and moral. It is important to note that these transactions were made both in cash and by check. This was how Rodrigo Fuenzalida learned that business matters were transacted by the Mind Science Foundation, an American firm! Was the United States somehow behind this complex plot? Their physical description, at least, was closer to that of Americans.

Emérico Bahamonde and his wife were two of the ranchers who recalled the enigmatic beings: "they were strangely dressed and had foreign accents." Mistrustfully, he told me that those tall, blond haired and blue-eyed men visited Ernesto's home. Was the entire plot therefore real? Jorge Anfruns has little trust for the entire affair, given that there is no visible responsible party. In the veteran ufologist's opinion, Ernesto de la Fuente's lacks sufficient solvency. "His credentials are at best confusing and he is tremendously fantasy-prone," he states. Fuenzalida, on the other hand, believes that "Ernesto is a very intelligent fellow" and at one point thought that a considerable part of the mystery was of his own making.

"Look," Fuenzalida admits, "I think that if [Friendship] was a mind control experiment, it would have been placed within the strictures of a study conducted by ultra-right wing eugenicists. These types have always been linked to mind control and paramilitary matters, and even linked to the U.S.."

In fact, the Chilean sociologists investigation managed to identify some of the men who hid themselves behind angelic names. "Michael"'s real name is supposedly "Andrea Nisbetti" and according to Fuenzalida, "entered the country using a passport made out to Antoni Issbeth...the passport's a phony document."

"So they're foreigners, then!"

"The information on Andrea Nisbeti," he adds, "was given to me by an engineer who was in contact with them. It turns out that there was a scientist by this name, a colleague of Werner Von Braun..."

"But he was German!" I exclaimed.

"Of course, at the time when the Russians and the Americans divided up the Nazi scientists, this one [Nisbeti] went along with the Americans, who later lost track of him."

Could Nazis have purchased an island in the Chonos Archipelago in which to develop their superior technology and "improvement of the species", concealing themselves as a religious sect?

As this article drew to a close, a letter was received at the newsroom which added some detail to the matter. According to our correspondent, who served five years in the Chilean Army at a radio station in Puerto Montt, the source of the Friendship affair can be found in an organization with ultra-rightist connections.

"We were sick of these devils, who often jammed our communications with immensely powerful high-tech distorting

equipment, which on occasions even produced invisble barriers surrounding all of the Taitao Peninsula and left all boats, including the Navy, bereft of communications."

Why should we believe what "Carlos T." had to say in his letter? Because he offered complementary information to what Raul Núñez and I already knew but was otherwise secret: such as the fact that a sailor, Luis Mata, had made countless trips on his cargo boat to the Taitao Peninsula, transporting CATTLE and being paid in gold. "Unfortunately," writes Carlos T., "he was a hopeless drunkard and talked too much about the "gringos", which led to his eventual disappearance and replacement by Alberto."

The equally mysterious Alberto had been stationed in Valparaíso as a ship captain prior to his recruitment by the Friendship. His present whereabouts are unknown. Equally unknown is the fate of a number of Israeli Mossad agents, who vanished without a trace in some canyons far from the tourist routes.

Nazis, a religious sect or true aliens -- the Friendship has once more entered into communication with ham radio operators, coinciding with the appearance of this report and opening a new field for research endeavors beyond the Chilean border.

Pablo Villarubia wanders through jungles and ancient ruins as naturally as strolling down a city street. This indefatigable explorer and author has covered every single facet of the paranormal, from ufology to cryptozoology, in Central America and Brazil. INEXPLICATA is honored to present his valuable work and talent to a new readership!

The Mysteries of Honduras

by Pablo Villarubia Mausó

Recovering from the consequences of a violent hurricane, Honduras is a land full of mysteries in its virgin rainforests. Tropical Bigfoot-like creatures, mystery beasts like the "arrancalenguas" (tongue-ripper), haunted houses and the remains of ancient civilizations combine with the exoticism of its still to be explored landscapes.

We had left behind Tegucigalpa, the Honduran capital as we headed along the road to the city of La Ceiba, on the country's Atlantic coast. Thousands of African palm trees flanked the road, and in the distance we could make out the majestic mountain vistas of the Pico Bonito National Park. The sun shone intensely and mercilessly. There was no indication that within less than a month one of the greatest natural disasters of all time would bear down upon that Central American republic: Hurricane Mitch, whose devastating fury would leave a trail of death in its path and losses in the millions of dollars. It is to be hoped that Honduras and its people may prevail over the global weather systems' lack of humor. Their territory, which is beyond the path of most traditional tourist destinations, holds some of the most disconcerting cryptozoological, parapsychological and archaeological enigmas of the continent. Luckily, its exuberant

vegetation has already begun its recovery from "Mitch"'s lethal impact, and the population is rebuilding the country with renewed energy and optimism.

"My grandfather told me that he ran into the Sisimite around 1912, up there on Pico Bonito. It walked like a man, had a very hairy body and was very tall," said Don Manuel Mejía, an octogenarian living in the village of La Unión, scant kilometers from La Ceiba. His shaky hand pointed toward the mountains robed in their thick foliage. But what was the Sisimite, really?

Much like its colder relatives, such as the Tibetan Yeti or the Sasquatch of the U.S and Canadian Pacific coast, the Sisimite is another such creature which can appear out of nowhere and vanish in the same way. According to Jesús Aguilar Paz, one of Honduras' most renowned folklorists, the Sisimite or Itacayo wanders the high mountain ranges and lives in dank caverns, feeding on wild fruit in the same way as its Mexican cousin, "El Peludo" (the Hairy One) and Argentina's "Ucumari".

"These monsters would kidnap women and take them to their lairs. It is said that man-apes were born of these matings," added the old man. The story of a woman who managed to escape from one such Sisimite abode is still discussed among the mountain villagers: the creature pursued her, carrying with it the three offspring they had had together and showing them to the mother, who had fled to the other side of a river, in hopes of attracting her to her children. Its efforts were in vain, and the troglodyte mortally threw the inhuman infants into the water. Other Sisimites have appeared in the Camasca Caverns (within the Intibuca region). Italian friar Frederico Lunardi, one of the most influential scholars of Honduran culture, associated the creatures with the Mayan god Chaac, "he who holds up the heavens, the god of water". According to Lunardi, within the caves there was a wall depicting "a hand with all its fingers" and a number of scratches allegedly made by the Sisimites, who would go there at midnight to scratch the walls with their claws.

At La Unión I met with Julieta Turcia, a peasant woman who confirmed the existence of such a creature, but which had not been seen for many years. "They're big and hairy. I managed to see a couple of them when I was a girl, up there in the hills. Their feet are on backward."

This curious feature is echoed in the descriptions of other creatures I heard about in the Brazilian Amazon, such as the "curupira", who is a smaller but equally brutish rainforest dweller. Along with my travelling companion of almost two weeks, explorer Joaquín Muñoz, knowledgeable about the Honduran wilderness, we climbed up the slopes of the Pico Bonito foothills. Accompanying us was young mountaineer Rossel Pavón Cruz. Prior to setting out on our hike, armed only with our canteens, we met José Saba Martínez, age 70, at the Santa Rita *hacienda*. "I once heard it said that there were giants in these mountains, but that they all disappeared. The ones that still exist are the "pact-makers", in other words, those who made a pact with the Devil and live up there," explained the farmer as he swatted mosquitoes off his back. José Martínez was a child when he encountered another class of beings, the Sipes, while hunting wild boar with his relatives.

"I moved here when I was 13 years old. I'm from Olancho, the largest and least-known province in the country, where the jungle takes over everything. I saw the Sipes in the San Francisco de la Paz mountains. They're small--about the size of a *cipote* (child). Some of them have beards down their knees and their women have really long hair. They root around in the freshly burned corn fields to eat the ashes, but they also eat fruit and animals." The farmer tone was so matter-of-fact that one would believe that these creatures formed part of the peasants' and the hunters' daily routine. His descriptions of the Sipes continued: "They don't speak to anyone. They're black, really black, like coal, and they walk around naked. When I saw them on the cornfield they were in a group, so I ran away, since it was said that whoever looks at them is beaten to death. I heard about cases involving people who died that way at the hands of the Sipes. These little men are short but tough. If you go hunting with dogs, they'll kill them all, yes they will."

Other tales involving Sipes indicated that the dwarves possess "feet pointing backward," much like the Sisimites. In their book Por Cuentas Aquí en Nacaome (Tegucigalpa, 1996), folklorists Karen Ramos and Melissa Valenzuela claim that the Sipes break into houses to eat the ashes in the ovens. One of their informants reported that a man once captured a Sipe and locked it in a barrel. He poured holy water over it at night and the poor creature turned up dead the following day.

Another of Olancho's improbable creatures is the *Comelenguas* (Tongue-Eater). "They killed it over there some 60 years ago. It was bigger than a dog, but had wings and was able to fly. It would only eat the cattle's tongues. A sorcerer killed it using a weapon firing "treated shots". In those days, the ranch owners were paying 4000 pesos to whoever could kill the beast, since it was leaving a trail of ruin among the beef cattle," he farmer explained. I had already gathered similar accounts in the state of Goias, Brazil some 40 years ago and which certain ufologists interpreted as mutilations caused by the *Chupacabras*. At La Unión, Manuel Mejía also made mention of the *Comelenguas* which was active in the bleak plateaus of Pico Bonito. "It's an animal that pulls out, cuts and eats the tongues of cows. It looks like a large dog, but is bell-shaped (?) and has a long tail," explained the old man.

The Museum of the Fantastic

The coastal town of Trujillo is located some 150 kilometers of La Ceiba, toward the east. Bloody battles were fought there between Spanish soldiers and English pirates; its cemetery holds the remains of many foreign invaders. The most visited one of these, in spite of its neglect among the overgrown vegetation and the cracked tombstones, is that of U.S. freebooter William Walker, whose dream

of conquering Central America with a handful of mercenaries came to an end in Trujillo. There are two versions concerning his death: one, that he died before a firing squad in 1860; the other, that he was hanged by the British who occupied the area at the

time. Professor Justino Galán, the "official chronicler" of this community of 6000 souls, lives in the area. The septuagenarian's home, on a Caribbean hillside, is somewhat unique, since it is a tin-walled museum concealing veritable archaeological and historical treasures: working gramophones, Spanish arquebuses and thousands of pieces of prehispanic pottery and stonework are chaotically spread throughout the location. Hundreds of bits of ceramic, which are in fact the legs of jars with small faces, appear to mushroom out of the museum floor. Others portray caciques, shamans, gods or demigods with their respective *nahuales* or "power animals" behind them--animals into which a sorcerer could allegedly transform.

"These are the menhir-idols which I found throughout the entire region, in the mountains. Some of them represent facial features, others spirals and sculpted geometric figures," said Professor Galán as he leaned against one of the rocks, the tallest of which stands 1.20 meters. As in the case of Javier Cabrera Darquea (the owner of a museum of fantastic figures in Ica, Perú), Justino Galán began recovering materials from the ranches and hillsides which would have certainly been ransacked and destroyed.

One of the few mentions made of the Stone Idols of Trujillo appears in the 17th-century chronicles of López de Salcedo and later cited by Italian friar Federico Lunardi in his most rare Honduras maya--etnología y arqueología de Honduras (Tegucigalpa, 1948). The chronicler indicated that the Trujillo area contained "three main idols who were worshipped in temples...they were shaped like women and were made of a green, marble-like stone in which they placed all their devotion and entrusted their affairs and cultivations. The idol burned by Hernando de Saavedra was the closest one and the native priest who took them there did not do so during the day, since it had apparently been said that the idol would slay all those who looked upon it..."

A Haunted House

Many of the pieces originate in the Cuyamel region, taken from its enigmatic and dangerous tunnel system. "These passages reach Betulia, some 15 to 20 kilometers distant," Justino discloses. Other pieces come from the other end, from Punta Betulia, some 20 kilometers west of Trujillo. "There one can still find large stone sculptures on the beach, which are unknown to archaeologists and which I haven't been able to photograph."

The following day, and at my insistence, we headed for Punta Betulia. Driving on the dirt and sand road, Justino talked about my old friend the Sisimite in those lands and other parts of Central America. "Around 1946, a chain gang cutting wood in the mountainous area of Capiro caught two Sisimites, male and female. They were hiding in cave and were about four feet tall. What was strange is that their legs were backward and their hair was very long. They only had four fingers and very short hands. The legs were long and had a hair reaching down to their knees. Some employees of the banana company, Standard, took them to Trujillo. I never got to see them, but they were there for some 10 to 12 days. The workers told me that the gringos wanted to take them to

La Ceiba and then to the United States. They would feed them meat, bananas and other things they wouldn't eat, and they died."

"Did you ever see a Sisimite?" I inquired.

"No, but there are still some of these animals in the Trujillo mountains, because their screams can be heard. Since I've slept in these woods I've heard them. We have virgin rainforests here between Calentura and Capiro, and its possible that some of these creatures may still exist."

Further along, on the road to Santa Fé, a town inhabited by the descendants of African slaves, Rufino pointed out some mountains.

"Over there, in San Antonio, about half an hour from here, there is a house that belonged to the Gleenes, a very wealthy family. They died a long time ago--they were the U.S consuls in Trujillo and today, the mansion, which was one of their summer retreats, is deserted. Not only that, its also haunted: One can hear strange, intense noises, such as the clanging of chains, the kicking of a mule or a horse, and always at night. A brother-in-law of mine worked there for three days and was chased away by the haunting."

Valuable archaeological remains were found in the mansion's vicinity, some of them made of stone, such as one with a strange head which can be found in Justino's museum and which resembles "The Martian God" of the Tassili Mountains in Algeria.

The Sacrificial Altar

Upon reaching Santa Fe -- known as Puntiacó to the vanished natives who once peopled the area-- we met Hilario Ramírez Calderón, age 43, who confirmed the story of the Sisimite's capture. His version differed somewhat from that of Professor Galán, perhaps because his recall was faulty or he had heard it from third parties. "They caught them with a net. They would only eat river shrimp. I think a ship belonging to Standard Fruit took them to the U.S...these Sisimites were taller than a person," he told us.

A few kilometers more, bordering the beach on the road until we reached the fishing village of Guadalupe. These people of slave-descent, who rarely mix with others, are practically isolated and living like their ancestors, who were brought from Jamaica by English pirates. They speak a language of their own, a mixture of English, French and African dialects. Their dwellings are huts made of straw and they celebrate, far from prying eyes, rituals similar to voodoo and Santería.

One of the fishermen, who was also a boatman, showed us some of the axe blades in his possession. "This is only a sample of what existed in the Guadalupe, Betulia and Santo Antonio area--the nucleus of a great civilization," Rufino noted.

We bargained with the boatman to be taken to Punto Betulia along with some fishermen. The seven or eight fishermen arranged their nets and some tied t-shirts around their heads as protection against the merciless sun. We then set off in silence.

After half an hour, bordering paradisiacal, totally unspoiled beaches, the sailors left us in front of two houses and went their

way. As the boat went off, we walked on the burning sand, blistering our feet, since we carried our boots on our backs to keep them dry. We were welcomed at the ruined house by the wife of one of Rufino's friends: surrounded by children with bellies inflated like balloons, chickens, mangy dogs and some small pigs, the woman told us how the abandoned homestead, just fifty meters away, was "spooked". "Strange sounds can be heard there," she explained. "People walking, chains being dragged, screams...for a long time we haven't heard anything." said the woman.

Justino Galván confirmed this fact, since he had spent many nights sleeping on that beach and had also heard the "ghosts". Walking toward the house, we found one of the sculptures--that of a metate (a kind of mortar) shaped like a boat, measuring 1.70 meters in length and according to Galván, weighing over 10,000 pounds. Behind it, there was a masonry chapel with a curious detail: between the bricks could be seen encrusted pieces of native ceramics. Further ahead we found a sort of elongated altar, and at one of its ends, the impressive sculpted head of a skeleton. "The Americans took the other statues in oxen-drawn carts and from there onto their ships. There were many tiger-heads (jaguars). Perhaps this had once been a sacrificial center presided by the Jaguar God," he commented.

Honduras--A Land of Giants

Perhaps one of the most valuable treasures within Rufino Galván's motley museum in Trujillo are the alleged "giant bones" found in La Unión, Olancho, and donated by the Puerto Menoca family. One engineer took a rib to New Orleans, where it was confirmed to be of human origin. It had been found in the mountains. "Judging from its size, its owner would have been some ten feet tall," said the museum's curator.

Proof of the existence of giants could perhaps be found in the grindstones discovered in Honduras: some of them are 8 feet tall and have very thick handles. "They must have eaten *masica*, a kind of corn tortilla mixed with fish and game. They were very healthy people, dressed in animal and jaguar skins. Very long strands of hair have been found in the caves in which they must have lived," adds Galván.

Further information on the presence of giants in Honduras can be found in the works of folklorists Karen and Melissa in another book, Por cuentas aquí en Sabanagrande (Stories told here in Sabanagrande). The elders state that a giant used to roam the area and that it left its mark on a large boulder. The explanation for his "giantism" is worthy of the folktales told in Spain: the giant had been a normal man before achieving his colossal stature, but divine punishment had fallen upon him for having slain his brother and family. For that reason, his soul and wandering body can still be seen, but only during Easter Week. Spanish chroniclers attested to the existence of "giant men" in Mexico and in Perú. One of them, López de Gómara (Historia de las Indias) pointed out in discussing the Honduran natives that "helmets they need not, for their heads are so rough that sword break upon hitting them, and for that reason, blows are not delivered upon them nor do they

allow themselves to be struck." The explanation may lie in the thickness of native skulls: Fray Federico Lunardi explains that he had reached the conclusion that the skull of the famous chieftain Lempira, who struggled against the Spaniards, must have been of extraordinary thickness, given the nature of his death.

Lunardi himself found, on the left bank of the Humuya River, while searching for curios in a tomb in 1940, a skull fragment along with "large shanks" (the long bones of the legs) having the extraordinary thickness of 13 millimeters! The remains were sent to Buenos Aires to the renowned Americanist José Imbelloni, an expert in craneology. According to Lunardi, Imbelloni "noted the peculiarity of the situation, but did not feel himself qualified to issue a verdict at the moment. He urged me to conduct further investigations to find out if this case was unique and isolated." But at the same site and at a lesser depth, Lunardi found other skull fragments two years later whose thicknesses varied between 8 and 11 millimeters. The skulls' inner surfaces clearly portrayed the capillaries and blood vessels.

Did a caste of giants or giant/human hybrids once exist in Honduras, having a much greater cranial density? Lunardi mentions the fact that a certain Owens, who conducted archaeological work in Copán, Honduras in 1892, found a well preserved skeleton with a skull described as "very thick". Still another discovery took place in 1994, in the caves of Talgua, 200 kilometers east of Tegucigalpa. These are the "crystal skeletons" allegedly contained within a "ritual chamber" found by four explorers. The skeletons of a number of occupants, completely covered in calcium crystals, were found within and allegedly had "a luminous aspect", dating back to before the Mayan occupation of the area (800 b.c.)

The interdimensional theory of the origin of UFOs, once the favorite of most ufologists, has been relegated to the dustbin by nuts-and-bolts, spacecraft-obsessed researchers. Here's another effort at correcting their thinking...

Patterns in the Void: Dimensions Beyond Our Own

by Scott Corrales

The following account of a possible visit to another dimension in time or space was forwarded to this author by Dr. Raul Rios Centeno, an investigator of the unexplained in Lima, Peru.

"Several months ago," begins his fascinating narration, "a patient came to see me about a serious case of hemiplegia. The patient claimed to be 30 years old but was unable to prove it, stating that she'd lost her formal identification card. It was a very strange case of hemiplegia, since upon examination with a CAT (Computerized Axial Tomography) scan, there were no areas showing bleeding vessels nor any traumatic lesions."

When I began asking questions about the case, the patient told me the following: "I was at a campground in the vicinity of

Markahuasi (the famous stone forest located some 56 km east of Lima) when I went out exploring late at night with some friends. Oddly enough, we heard the strains of music and noticed a small torch-lit shack. I was able to see people dancing inside, but upon getting closer I felt a sudden sensation of cold which I paid little attention to, and I stuck my head through an open door. It was then that I saw the occupants were clad in 17th century fashion. I tried to enter the room, but one of my girlfriends pulled me out."

"The patient was tugged out by one of her friends, and her body became paralyzed in half precisely as she was drawn out of the "shack". My conclusion is that the probable cause behind the hemiplegia is unknown. No medical test was able to ascertain its cause. Nonetheless, an EEG was able to show that the left hemisphere of the brain did not show signs of normal functioning, as well as an abnormal amount of electric waves.

"Many Peruvians claim having had contact experiences in Markahuasi, while many scholars indicate the existence of a dimensional doorway. No conclusive proof of this exists, of course. Some friends, myself, obviously, and others who have visited the stone forest can attest to the existence of a strange kind of energy. According to those persons having a knowledge of this subject, dimensional doorways tend to open and close not necessarily in specific places. The patient is currently undergoing physical rehabilitation in Lima's Arzobispo Loayza National Hospital.

"The unanswered question is, of course, what would have happened if her body had entered completely into the shack? Would she have gone into another dimension? I suppose the truth shall be known in the fullness of time."

Dr. Rios fascinating account was followed up with the following information concerning the CAT scan results on the anonymous patient. The test, he indicated, showed "Intact intracranial regions without any specific area having been compromised. There is neither swelling nor color changes which may suggest some manner of trauma. The clinician certifying this exam cannot find a justified cause for the hemiplegia in the left hemisphere, due to the fact its vascularization and irrigation fall within parameters considered to be normal. The EEG shows areas evidently paralyzed due to the lack of electric current transmission. These tests lead me to believe -- and this is my personal opinion, since my colleagues have simply catalogued it as an "unknown affliction" -- that the dimensional shift, or "partial entry" of this person into this anomalous zone, have able to produce a change in the energy flow existing in her nervous system, or perhaps even a change in the type of energy. Given that the cranial area is where our nerve impulses are contained -- in other words, the right cerebral hemisphere controls the left side of the body and viceversa -- this could be the reason why the left hand autonomous nervous system did not at all affect the operation of crucial organs such as the heart or the stomach, which are governed by the right cerebral hemisphere."

A well-known author once described talk of other dimensions as "science fiction jiggery-pokery". In the UFO field,

particularly among believers of the nuts-and-bolts aliens from space contingent, belief in other dimensions is considered a sign of mental bankruptcy. Yet these other dimensions, levels or worlds beyond our own represent beliefs far older than those expressed by 20th century authors and theoreticians. Religions throughout the course of human history have expressed a belief in parallel worlds adjacent to our own, usually accessible only to tribal shamans, sorcerers or people gifted with special insight. Certain parts of the world were famous as locations in which the barrier between the dimensions or worlds was particularly slender, and were known as places where wonderful and often frightening sights could be seen, or else as locations where human intruders could vanish without a trace. Almost all traditions express a belief that there is life in these alternate universes: these are the abodes of fairies, elves, and even angels in some cases, and of monsters, ghosts and much worse in other traditions. Northern European traditions expressed the belief that elves and fairies took advantage of the right angles of human dwellings to build doorways to their own realities (and in turn, Frank Belknap Long took advantage of this idea to write "The Hounds of Tindalos", a Lovecraftian tale of extradimensional monsters who can materialize only through rooms having walls at right angles -- circular chambers offering the only kind of protection against them). Jacques Bergier believed that such gateways to other dimensions were an artificial and supernatural phenomenon created by powerful forces on "the other side" to carry out their unguessable transactions in our own level of existence.

The late Carlos Castañeda wrote that the (real? imaginary?) sorcerer Don Juan Matus believed in the existence of an area best described as a "crevasse between realities" in which the material world imperceptibly gives way to the spirit world and other dimensions. However, only someone well versed in the hidden lore may recognize these gateways for what they are and make use of them. In his book Guía a la España Mágica (A Guide to Magical Spain) Spanish author Juan G. Atienza has pointed out that the Grail Epics are in fact a quest for this particular place where the mortal world meets the undying lands or heaven.

Dimensional Portals in Mexico?

Ing. Marco Antonio Reynoso is the director and founder of Fundación Cosmos A.C., an investigative organization dedicated to investigating UFOs and other unusual phenomena. The following reproduces the entirety of a communication received from Ing. Reynoso concerning the possibility of an interdimensional gateway existing in Mexico.

"During the course of our research in the state of Coahuila (Mexico) between 1993 and 1997, around the communities of Villa de García, Icamole, Paredón and the community farms of La Azufrosa, El Delgado, El Milagro and Mesillas, we interviewed a number of local residents and heard their testimonies on UFO sightings. They told us that upon occasion they had been pursued by these vehicles and that their cattle had been stolen from them. All of these reports led us ever deeper into the wilderness, to a point smack-dab in the middle of the desert.

"In an isolated region, encircled by foothills that appear to be protecting a plateau similar in appearance to Masada in Israel and Devil's Tower in Wyoming, there rises the upland area known as La Mesilla. This formation was a marine volcano thousands or perhaps even millions of years ago. The entire region was once underwater, covered by an ancient sea we have dubbed the Sea of Thetys -- a fact confirmed by the myriad fossils of marine life, left behind when the seabed turned into dry land. Erosion and time have carved out the location's current appearance.

"Our hypothesis concerning these mysterious geological formations is that they perhaps constitute an exit point for the planet's geomagnetic energy, which is employed by unidentified flying objects as a power source or possibly even to cross some dimensional vortex formed as these energy escape points, which cause a deformation of the planet's magnetic flow lines, causing "portals" to open. Our group has been able to confirm this through the detection of a disk approximately one hundred meters in diameter, having red and yellow lights at each end. The object penetrated the "doorway" with a burst of white light that lit up the plateau's entire outline in the dark desert night. We also saw it re-emerge and move away at considerable speed.

"On that occasion we attempted to record it on videotape, but problems emerged regarding the tape itself. These anomalous events transpire frequently: on the five times that our group has visited the area, we have been able to make successful recordings at a distance of approximately twenty kilometers from the plateau itself, which stands at fourteen hundred meters. Reaching its base poses considerable hardship due to the nature of the terrain: during only such effort on our part, we came within five kilometers of our goal before having to turn back to our observation point fifteen kilometers behind us, due to a series of events which took place as we approached the plateau. It was when we decided to retreat that we witnessed the arrival of the enormous disk which landed right where we stood, only to rise and hide behind the plateau, with the great luminous manifestation occurring next, which bathed the entire area in light."

Skeptics may simply dismiss Ing. Reynoso's account as contemporary myth-making, but the possibility that certain parts of our planet may harbor points whose nature provides natural "gateways" to and from other dimensions cannot be dismissed.

Forbidden Books

Spanish journalist Alfonso Serra tells the story of Spanish psychic Eulalia Casanovas, who investigated a case during which a young woman disappeared under extremely mysterious circumstances in the early 1980's on the peak of Monserrat in Catalunya. Much like a piece of supernatural fiction, the case begins on night at a Benedictine monastery, where a young man conducted his studies. At one point, while doing research at the monastery's library, he came across a number of old books which turned out to be treatises on magic. Joined by his girlfriend, the young man decided to follow the instructions given in the unusual texts and engage in a magic ritual held elsewhere on the same peak.

So far we have all the elements of a classic thriller, but the true horror was about to begin.

Casanovas was allegedly told by the nameless young man that no sooner had the ritual started, he noticed that his girlfriend was ever so slowly fading away from him, disappearing until all that was left was an amulet she had been wearing for protection (which--we are to suppose--must have fallen to the ground. The authorities apparently suspected the sorcerer manqué of murdering his hapless companion, but their research did not turn up evidence nor indeed a motive. Did the ritual, in fact, "gate" the woman to another dimension?

Now You See Them...Now You Don't

Some of the chestnuts of the "mysterious disappearance" casebook have been written off as hoaxes, such as the Oliver Lerch/Oliver Thomas incidents and the supposed vanishing of farmer David Lang, which was considered as proof that it was indeed possible to accidentally side-step into another dimension and never be heard from again.

Unfortunately, there are other cases which cannot be written off so easily as fabrications or misunderstandings. The following mind-bending case was featured in veteran Spanish ufologist Antonio Ribera's Secuestrados por Extraterrestres ("Abducted by Extraterrestrials") (Planeta, 1981):

On Easter Week, 1976, a well-to-do couple, their infant daughter and the child's nanny were at Barcelona's Prat Airport getting ready to take a flight that would take them to the island of Mallorca on a brief holiday. After parking the family vehicle, the husband left his family in a waiting area while he went to the Iberia ticket counter to secure the necessary boarding passes.

Upon returning to the waiting area, he found his wife but no traces of the nanny and the two-year-old daughter. The wife indicated that she had not seen the nanny, whose name is given as "Maria", leave at any moment, but assumed she had gone to the rest rooms and taken the baby with her.

Time passed and there was still no sign of the nanny. The nervous young mother went to the ladies' room and did not find her there. At that point, airport security was notified and María was repeatedly paged over the PA system; the airport was then shut down and the control tower ordered all departing flights to remain on the ground while the police conducted a forty-five minute long search of the terminal.

At a given point, a humble old woman approached the distraught mother, gently advising her to pray for the return of her daughter.

Before the grief-stricken mother could say a word, two amazing things happened simultaneously: the elderly woman vanished into the encircling crowd of onlookers, and the mother realized that the nanny, holding the child, was sitting right next to her.

In an understandable mixture of joy and anger, the young mother asked the Maria where she had gone all this time. The nanny replied: "Me? Why, I've been here all along!"

Something stranger still occurred when an effort was made to take the baby girl from the nanny's arms--the child appeared to be physically stuck to the nanny. After a prolonged struggle, the husband literally tore his daughter from María's arms, noticing that the part of the nanny's arms that had remained concealed had

acquired an unnatural shade of red.

With the situation seemingly back to normal, the shaken family boarded the flight to Mallorca. The nanny erupted into hysterics midway through the crossing, having to be restrained by flight attendants until they arrived at Son San Juan airport. Once on Mallorca, the family decided to return home, given that the nanny's condition was rapidly deteriorating. Back in Barcelona, María was placed in a private hospital and sedated.

Clinical hypnotist Francisco Rovatti would later hypnotize the nanny in an effort to recover her memories from the time in which she was apparently not physically present in the airport or in our reality, for that matter. The sessions with Rovatti revealed that the nanny had heard "an unpleasant-sounding male voice" summoning her as she sat next to her employers at the airport. Efforts to go beyond that point caused the patient to erupt into hysterics. "One could say," Rovatti observed later, "that a tremendously powerful post-hypnotic block had been put in place from the moment that María claims to have seen "a red light" on the floor...this is an extraordinarily dramatic experience, but any attempts to pursue it would jeopardize the patient's life."

Conclusion

In both Western and Eastern cultures alike we are told to believe in a spirit world or parallel universe in which our deities, their minions and their adversaries appear to dwell. This belief is so deeply rooted that to even question it is an exercise in futility. However, even when mathematicians and quantum physicists insist that such levels of existence are not only possible but probable, 20th century humanity refuses to believe that it could well be at the mercy of forces beyond its comprehension.